

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-83 (canceled).

84. (New) A package for at least one glove, comprising:-

an outer hermetically sealed envelope openable under preset conditions; said outer envelope enclosing

an inner envelope comprising a first inner sheet and a second inner sheet in substantial overlying relationship; and

at least one glove disposed between said first inner sheet and said second inner sheet, wherein a cuff portion of said at least one glove is substantially aligned with free edges of said first inner sheet and said second inner sheet; and

suitable grasping means for enabling each of opposed sides of said cuff portion in proximity to said first inner sheet and said second inner sheet, respectively, to be held firmly with respect to said first inner sheet and said second inner sheet, respectively, at least during a part of a preset unpacking procedure of said package.

85. (New) A package as claimed in claim 84, wherein said package comprises two said gloves in juxtaposed arrangement, such that a cuff portion of each said glove is substantially aligned with said free edges of said first inner sheet and said second inner sheet.

86. (New) A package as claimed in claim 84, wherein said grasping means comprises, for each said glove, at least one first tab joined to said first inner sheet and at least one second tab joined to said second inner sheet at the longitudinal edges thereof, each said tab comprising projecting portions that project into the said cuff portion of the corresponding said glove.

87. (New) A package as claimed in claim 86, wherein said projecting portions comprise suitable adhesive zones, for temporarily holding the gloves in place with respect to the package and the tabs.

88. (New) A package as claimed in claim 84, wherein said grasping means are in the form of apertures comprised in said first inner sheet and second inner sheet such as to enable opposed sides of said cuff portion to be held firmly with respect to said first inner sheet and said second inner sheet, respectively, when a suitable suction force is applied externally to said first inner sheet and said second inner sheet.

89. (New) A package as in claim 84 wherein each said glove is provided with at least a portion of the hand portion thereof folded over the remaining portion of the glove.

90. (New) A package as claimed in claim 84, wherein each said glove is provided with at least a portion of the cuff portion thereof folded backwardly over the same to expose an inner surface of the cuff portion of the glove.

91. (New) A glove unpacking apparatus for unpacking the package of claim 84, comprising:

separating means for holding said first inner sheet and said second inner sheet, after said outer envelope has been at least partially removed, while said separating means further separates said first inner sheet from said second inner sheet such as to open the said cuff portion of said gloves.

92. (New) Apparatus as claimed in claim 91, wherein said separating means comprising: a table and a pad in overlying relationship, driving means for reciprocal driving at least one of said table and said pad with respect to one another, suction means at mutually facing surfaces thereof, plurality of apertures in each one of said mutually facing surfaces that are in communication with suitable vacuum source, a housing having an inlet and outlet openings that substantially aligned with the separating means, conveying means for conveying a said glove package from said inlet opening to position in between said pad and said table, opening means for holding and opening the cuff portion of said cuffs after said first sheet is separated from said second sheet.

93. (New) Apparatus as claimed in claim 92, wherein: said opening means comprise, for each glove, a pair of probes adapted for reciprocal moving from a retracted position substantially clear of said outlet opening to a deployed position wherein the ends of said probes are inserted into the said cuff portion of the corresponding glove when said cuff portion has been opened by said separating means, each said pair of probes is adapted for reversibly distancing the probes one from the other as to hold and stretch said cuff portion, where said opening means is further adapted to remove said gloves from said package by returning to said retracted position while holding said gloves.

94. (New) Apparatus as claimed in claim 93, further comprising suitable cuff expansion means capable of being reversibly expanded from a first configuration that is sufficiently compact such as to be introduced into said cuff portion, to a second configuration sufficiently expanded such as to abut with respect to and to expand said cuff portion.

95. (New) Apparatus as claimed in claim 94, wherein said cuff expansion means comprises, for each said glove, a suitable inflatable balloon operatively connected to suitable transport means for reversibly transporting said balloon from a retracted position substantially clear of said outlet opening to a deployed position wherein the balloon is inserted into the said cuff portion of the corresponding glove when said cuff portion is held open by said opening means, to an extraction position outside of said outlet opening when said balloon is expanded and held abutted against said cuff portion.

96. (New) Glove donning system comprising a housing accommodating:-

- glove unpacking apparatus according to claim 91;
- at least one vacuum chamber operatively connected to a vacuum source, said vacuum chamber comprising cuff holding means comprising suction means and at least one suitable contact surface for sealingly holding a cuff portion of a glove in an open condition when said cuff portion is in abutting contact with said at least one surface;
- first transport means for transporting said at least one glove from said unpacking apparatus to said at least one vacuum chamber.

97. (New) Glove donning system comprising a housing accommodating:-

- glove unpacking apparatus according to claim 92;
- at least one vacuum chamber operatively connected to a vacuum source, said vacuum chamber comprising cuff holding means comprising suction means and at least one suitable contact surface for sealingly holding a cuff portion of a glove in an open condition when said cuff portion is in abutting contact with said at least one surface;
- first transport means for transporting said at least one glove from said unpacking apparatus to said at least one vacuum chamber.

98. (New) Glove donning system comprising a housing accommodating:-

- glove unpacking apparatus according to claim 94;
- at least one vacuum chamber operatively connected to a vacuum source, said vacuum chamber comprising cuff holding means comprising suction means and at least one suitable contact surface for sealingly holding a cuff portion of a glove in an open condition when said cuff portion is in abutting contact with said at least one surface;
- first transport means for transporting said at least one glove from said unpacking apparatus to said at least one vacuum chamber.

99. (New) Donning system as claimed in claim 96, wherein said at least one vacuum chamber further comprises a second sealable opening for introducing said at least one glove via said first transport means.

100. (New) Donning system as claimed in claim 98, wherein said first transport means are operatively connected to said opening means and adapted for introducing said at least one glove to said at least one vacuum chamber.

101. (New) Donning system as claimed in claim 91, wherein a second transport means is provided for transporting and aligning said cuff expansion means with said at least one glove held in said vacuum chamber via said opening means, wherein said transport means is further adapted for introducing said cuff expansion means into said cuff of said glove and for partially expanding such as to abut and hold said cuff.

102. (New) Donning system as claimed in claim 91, wherein said cuff expansion means is adapted for expanding the periphery of said cuff portion until said cuff portion is brought into abutting contact with said cuff holding means, said vacuum chamber is adapted for actuating said suction means and holding said cuff portion of a glove in an open condition when said cuff portion is in abutting contact with said at least one surface, said at least one vacuum chamber is adapted for providing a vacuum therein when said portion is in sealing abutting with said at least one surface.

103. (New) Donning system as claimed in claim 102, further comprising third transport means for reversibly and selectively transporting said at least one vacuum chamber from a loading position adapted for enabling the said cuff expansion means to expand said cuff portion into abutment with said cuff holding means, to a donning position wherein said at least one vacuum chamber is in sealing contact with a donning opening, such that access to an inside of said glove is permitted from the outside of said housing.

104. (New) Donning system as claimed in claim 98, further comprising at least one magazine for storing and selectively dispensing said glove packages to a fourth transport system, wherein said fourth transport system is adapted for transporting each glove package to said separating means.

105. (New) A method for packaging gloves comprising:-

providing an inner envelope having a first inner sheet and a second inner sheet in overlying relationship, said inner envelope comprising suitable grasping means;

temporarily separating said first and second inner sheets and introducing therebetween at least one glove with its cuff portion substantially aligned with parallel overlying edges of said first and second inner sheets;

enclosing said inner envelope within an outer envelope which is subsequently hermetically sealed such as to be openable under preset conditions;

wherein said grasping means are adapted for enabling each of opposed sides of said cuff portion in proximity to said first inner sheet and said second inner sheet, respectively, to be held firmly with respect to said first inner sheet and said second inner sheet, respectively, at least during a part of a preset unpacking procedure of said package.

106. (New) Method for unpacking a glove package comprising at least one glove having a cuff portion and enclosed in an inner envelope having first and second overlying inner sheets and an outer envelope, the method comprising:-

removing said outer envelope;

separating the said first and second inner sheets in a manner such that the cuff portion of the at least one glove is correspondingly separated and opened slightly;

holding and expanding said cuff portion;

removing said glove from said inner envelope.

107. (New) Method of donning gloves from a package accommodating at least one glove, comprising:-

removing said at least one glove from said package according to the method of claim 106;

introducing a suitable cuff expansion means to the open cuff portion of the glove;

expanding the cuff expansion means such as to abut and hold said cuff portion peripherally while removing said glove from said package;

transporting said cuff expansion means holding said glove to a suitable vacuum chamber having suitable cuff holding means;

aligning the cuff portion with said cuff holding means;

expanding said cuff expansion means such that said cuff portion is in abutting contact with said cuff holding means;

actuating said holding means so as to hold the opened cuff portion in an expanded open position at said cuff holding means;

providing a vacuum at said vacuum chamber on the outer surface of said glove such as to expand the glove under the influence of atmospheric pressure acting on the inner exposed part of the glove;

allowing access of a user's hand to said cylinder for donning the glove therein;

terminating the said vacuum in said cylinder.